

not have anything to do with philosophy, and it does not have anything to do with politics. It has to do with making sure the kids get the ideas. That is it. . . . To be able to read our language, you have to know the sounds. You have got to know how to map it onto the letters . . . you have got to do it quickly, and you have got to know why you are reading and have good vocabulary and the things that Dr. Snow spoke about. It is never an either/or.

This bill will prevent teachers from following that sound advice. Instead, teachers will be forced to follow a mandate from Washington requiring all teachers across the country to follow one formula to teach reading—regardless of local needs. Is this what the Republicans mean when they ask for more local control of education? Schools and communities already have control over education. The Federal Government shouldn't start micro-managing their reading programs.

We should be doing more, not less, to ensure that teachers and school districts are free to design programs to meet the unique local needs of the children. The Reading Excellence Act approved by the Senate Committee by a unanimous, bi-partisan vote would give local educators the flexibility and training the experts say they need.

This bill doesn't just take control away from public schools. It also takes money away from public schools. We all recognize that recruiting and training more tutors is an important goal. President Clinton began his effort two years ago, with his "America Reads Challenge." The Senate Committee bill would build on the success of that program, so that local schools will benefit from available community resources.

The House bill is a detour away from these worthy goals. Instead of helping schools capitalize on volunteer tutors and community resources, it wastes funds on private tutoring programs. It denies support for successful school-based programs in which tutoring assistance is closely linked to a child's classroom instruction.

The bill also requires local schools to spend time, money, and other scarce resources overseeing private tutoring programs. Funneling scarce public dollars into these private programs will undermine accountability for academic results and expenditure of federal dollars.

This bill has major flaws. It does little or nothing to help public school children learn to read or improve their chance of receiving a good education. Other provisions in the bill are worthwhile, because they encourage better teaching, more trained volunteer tutors, and more support for community-based family literacy programs. These initiatives will ensure that many children get the extra assistance they need to learn to read well and early.

These issues are too important for us to leave this House bill as the final word. I will do all I can to pass a strong bipartisan bill in the Senate in the coming months—the nation's children deserve no less.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 3717

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now turn to Calendar No. 361, H.R. 3717, prohibiting Federal funds for the distribution of needles; that there be 30 minutes for debate to be equally divided with no amendments or motions in order. I further ask that following the conclusion or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to third reading and final passage, all without intervening action or debate, and finally I ask unanimous consent it be in order for me to ask for the yeas and nays on passage at this time.

Mr. FORD. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, I do object on behalf of this side.

Mr. LOTT. I now ask for the yeas and nays.

Mr. FORD. I object.

Mr. LOTT. Again, Mr. President, I should note that if we could have gotten that agreement, since it has already passed the House, this bill would have gone directly to the President for his signature. It passed the House April 29th by a vote of 287 to 140. I would think that this is something we would want to do. I think for the Federal Government to be distributing needles encourages people to use needles for drug abuse, and I had hoped we could get it cleared. We had worked earlier to try to get some sort of agreement on how we could clear it, with maybe even some amendments being ordered. We could not do it.

Also, in order to get the President's signature, we would have to do it in this way.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 2610

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we turn to Calendar No. 273, H.R. 2610, the reauthorization of the drug czar office, and immediately following the reporting by the clerk, the chairman be recognized to modify the amendment, the committee substitute; that there be 30 minutes for debate to be equally divided with no amendments or motions in order. I further ask that following the conclusion or yielding back of this time, the Senate proceed to immediate adoption of the committee substitute to be followed immediately by third reading and final passage, all without intervening action or debate. And, finally, I ask unanimous consent it be in order for me to ask for the yeas and nays on passage at this time.

Mr. FORD. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, there are some who had hoped to offer some amendments. They were in the process of trying to work these amendments out where they would be agreeable. That has not transpired yet. So, then, on behalf of this side, I object.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I must object. I object because what the major-

ity leader proposes is to add a very significant piece of substantive drug legislation relating to the crack-powder cocaine sentencing issues.

I note that the Judiciary Committee has not reported this legislation. This legislation is subject to significant debate. For example, the costs of the most recent proposal offered by Senators ABRAHAM and ALLARD are very significant.

According to the Justice Department—the 5-year cost estimate to our federal prison budget is more than \$790 million. The 10-year estimate—more than \$1.9 billion.

This is just one example of the significant policy implications of this proposal. Frankly, the Judiciary Committee must be given the opportunity to report this legislation before we debate this on the floor.

In contrast, we have fully debated the drug director legislation introduced last summer. The Judiciary Committee has debated it, the committee held hearings, the committee developed a bipartisan re-authorization bill, the committee reported the bill last November, since then we have worked with Senator MCCAIN and the Armed Services Committee to work out their issues with this bill.

The bottom lines—we have a bipartisan, fully debated, bill; and we need to get the drug director's office re-authorized.

There are many particular, specific drug policy issues to debate. Crack-cocaine is just one of them. Youth drug abuse, youth violence, drug interdiction, and many more all need to be debated.

But, let's keep our eye on the ball, and let's re-authorize General McCaffrey's office. The General needs our support.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I should note we had at least one very important amendment that a Senator wanted to offer on this side of the aisle to this bill, too, dealing with the penalties for the use of powder cocaine. Certainly, it is a very important issue, and I would like it to be considered, but I called upon that Senator—actually it was two Senators—and said you will have a chance to offer that on other legislation including State, Justice, Commerce. He was willing, then, to agree to put it aside.

I really think we need to reauthorize the drug czar office. I am hoping this is not the final word on this. Maybe we can work out something in July to consider it. But our problem is, we are really running out of time. I think it is going to be unconscionable if we can't find some way to quickly reauthorize the drug czar's office. We will have to do it without it taking up more than just a couple or 3 hours, because we just don't have the time, when you look at the appropriations bills and everything else we are going to need to do.